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the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 50

Fifteenth Year

December 17, 1948

The Ecumenical Review

The second issue of the "Ecumenical Review", which will appear before Christmas, contains a number of articles and documents the study of which is indispensable for a full understanding of the nature and results of the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

The two new Presidents of the Council, Professor T.C. Chao and Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, write from the standpoint of the Younger Churches and the American Churches respectively. On the basis of the discussions in the first section Professor Schlink of Germany seeks to answer the question: What is the World Council? Mr. Chandran Devanesan of India writes as a young Asian Christian. The Bishop of Derby analyses the results of the Lambeth Conference.

The chronicle section throws considerable light on the attitude of the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches to the Assembly. The most significant utterances about ecumenical relationships of the Moscow Conference are reproduced and discussed. And the facts concerning the invitations to Roman Catholic observers are told. There is also a survey of Roman Catholic comments upon the Assembly.

The well-known magazine "Christendom", which was a publication of the American Committee for the World Council of Churches has now been incorporated with the "Ecumenical Review". Subscriptions should be sent to Malagnou 17, Geneva, or to the World Council of Churches, 7 Kensington Church Court, London W.8, or to the World Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10.

E.P.S. Geneva

The United Nations Acts on Human Rights

For the first time in history, governments representing the greater part of the world's population have reached agreement on the broad definition of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United Nations, in its Third Session at Paris (see E.P.S. No. 46), formally adopted a Universal Declaration on Human Rights, by a vote of 48 in favour, none against, and 8 abstaining.

The body of the Declaration contains 30 Articles. These cover a wide range of human relationships. They include the personal, political, and legal rights which have won progressive recognition over the last few centuries. The document takes on a contemporaneous colour in its more ample provisions for social and economic freedom. While protection of personal liberty from inroads by State and society is specially stressed, man is not viewed as an isolated being, but rather in terms of his place in social experience.

The Churches of various countries were instrumental in securing strengthened provisions for human rights in the United Nations Charter. Thereafter, acting separately through their national commissions or cooperatively through the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, they have steadily pressed for sound international action to define man's rights and freedom and to promote observance of them.

Article 16 which deals specifically with freedom of thought, conscience and religion, can have far-reaching significance. It reads:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or beliefs in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

Short as it is, the Article was a long time in the making. Preliminary study extended over a few years and involved consultation with church leaders in many parts of the world. The draft that had been prepared encountered a severe test in the deliberations at Paris. In Committee debates, representatives of the Moslem world strenuously opposed inclusion of specific reference to freedom to change one's religion or belief. The U.S.S.R., in contending that freedom of thought and freedom to perform religious services must be in accordance with the laws of the country concerned, would have subjected both the definition and the practice of religious freedom to rigid state control. Many Latin American countries initially favoured a far more limited statement.

By approval of the Social and Humanitarian Committee, the Declaration was submitted for final action to a Plenary Session of the General Assembly. The delegates of Pakistan, speaking from the standpoint of Islam and quoting the Koran, "unhesitatingly and unequivocally" supported the full text of the Article on religious freedom, stressing the right to change one's religion. This revolutionary statement, although not endorsed by the delegate of Egypt, can have vital bearing on the missionary movement. The comments of delegates from the U.S.S.R. and related countries, while stressing specific criticisms which prevented their governments from accepting the Declaration, made it evident that the concept of human rights which is based upon a materialistic view is radically different from that which accepts a spiritual foundation of life and society. Such differences cannot be ignored in interpreting the contemporary world situation.

The Declaration has been recognised by the United Nations as a first step towards a legally binding Covenant for which many States have already pledged their support. Both the World Council of Churches and the International

Missionary Council have, by formal resolution, declared that this next step is necessary. Accordingly, the Churches will continue their representation when the Human Rights Commission proceeds with the drafting of the Covenant at its Fourth Session in the Spring of 1949. E.P.S. Geneva

Amsterdam Publication

An important booklet has just been published by the Student Christian Movement Press in London; "The Message and Reports of the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches, with Aids to Study and Discussion."

In this booklet each report of the four sections at Amsterdam is introduced by one of those who took part in its preparation. A number of questions for discussion are added. The booklet is intended for lay and clerical groups who wish to study the findings of the Amsterdam Assembly. (Price 3/-). A German translation of this study is in the press, and will be published by the Furche Verlag and Evangelisches Verlagswerk. E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Meeting of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

The 40th anniversary meeting of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America was held in Cincinnati from December 1 to 3. Bishop Stamm, of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, was elected President of the Council in succession to the layman Mr. Charles P. Taft. Mrs. Douglas Horton was elected Vice-President, being the first woman to hold this office. As it has become customary for the Vice-President to succeed to the Presidency, it is likely that, in 1950, the Council will have its first woman President.

Among other business, the Council accepted (there were some members refraining from voting) a strongly worded statement in favour of full equality of rights for all, without distinction on the grounds of race, creed or colour, and in condemnation of all policies of racial segregation. The Council itself is a good example of that which it advocates; the full and active participation of Negro delegates in all the work of the Council was one of the most satisfactory features of this session.

The Council heard an address on "The Place of Evangelism in the Life of the Churches" by Bishop Stephen Neill, Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. E.P.S. Geneva

CANADA

Canadian Council of Churches

This Council, which unites all the larger non-Roman Churches in Canada, held its annual meeting at Ottawa from November 23 to 25. The Rev. Dr. Woodside, of Chalmers Church, Ottawa, was elected President in place of Dr George Gilmour, Chancellor of Mac Master University, Hamilton. Dr W.J. Gallagher was asked to continue as Secretary.

The Council received reports from its delegates to the Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam. It is clear that these Canadian Churches are fully committed to the ecumenical movement and take their respons-

ibilities in this direction very seriously. The Council of Churches has a special department for ecumenical affairs.

The Council deplored the hold which the gambling habit is acquiring in Canadian life, and particularly expressed the desire that greyhound racing should not be legalised in Canada.

An ecumenical service was held in Chalmers Church, Ottawa, attended by the delegates to the Council and by a large number of Ottawa church people, at which the preacher was Bishop Stephen Neill, Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches.

E.P.S. Geneva

Refugee Orphans to be Resettled in North and South
America

Two hundred and fifty refugee orphans - the sick and handicapped along with the healthy and normal - will be resettled in the United States by the Lutheran World Federation. Mr. William Hallam Tuck, Director General of the International Refugee Organisation, termed the Lutheran offer "one of the most generous IRO has received."

Outlining the plan in a letter to IRO, Dr Clarence Krumbholz, Director of the Welfare Division of the National Lutheran Council of the United States, stated: "We guarantee care for all the orphans, either in foster homes or in institutions as would be indicated by their particular needs. We understand that there are some handicapped children among them for whom we can offer specialised care in institutions which have facilities for such children. Our plan, therefore, includes the total group with full awareness of all this entails."

In addition to these orphans, the United States Brethren Committee has collected 2000 job and housing assurances for D.P.s who are now being processed by the Lutheran World Federation representatives in Germany and Austria. From Italy more than 70 "non-eligibles" have had their passage paid to South America in the last several weeks by Mrs. Kruger who represents both the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches Refugee Division in Rome.

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Japan Christian University Foundation

The Japan Christian University Foundation, which will promote support for the establishment of an international non-denominational University of graduate standing at Mitaka, 15 miles from Tokyo, has been formed in New York.

The new foundation will replace the interdenominational Committee for a Christian University in Japan organised in the Spring of 1947 by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Nine denominational mission boards have named 18 members to the Board of Directors.

A nation-wide campaign from April 18 to June 5, 1949, to raise a \$10,000,000 building fund will be conducted by the new Foundation.

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...in this direction very serious. The Council of Europe has a special department for economic affairs.

The Council of Europe has the honor to hold the Council of Europe in London, and particularly expressed the desire that the Council of Europe should not be neglected in London.

An important meeting was held in London, Council of Europe, which was attended by the Council of Europe and by a large number of other Council of Europe, which the Council of Europe and by a large number of other Council of Europe, which the Council of Europe and by a large number of other Council of Europe.

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MEXICOA National Committee for Evangelical Defence

The National Committee for Evangelical Defence, the agency through which Protestant denominations officially protest persecution of members, has been reorganised.

Bishop David G. Ruesga, of the "Assemblies of God", new executive secretary of this groupe, outlined the aims of the committee as follows: "To procure and document facts, from witnesses, of each incident of discrimination and harassment; to present such cases to the Ministry of the Interior, which is charged with the enforcement of laws against religious persecution; and to publicize such incidents in the local and foreign press."

He said that for the most part attacks were made by irresponsible groups bent more on mischief than on religious crusading. He added that only in rare instances have Roman Catholic priests been involved in the persecution of Protestants, and then only in remote districts of "fanatical populations".

According to Bishop Ruesga, persecutions have increased since the war, but he expressed hope that his committee's new programme of action will reduce the number of such incidents.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYRelease of Army Chaplains from Imprisonment
in Russia

The Evangelical Press Service, of Bethel-Bielefeld, learns that certain chaplains of the German armed forces have now returned home from the Soviet Union, together with civil internee pastors. This is remarkable inasmuch as it was originally stated by the Russian authorities that there was as little prospect of Army chaplains' being released as of staff officers.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYBerlin School Conflict Over

Adherence by Christian parents in Berlin to their right to have their children educated in a Christian manner has led to a clash on the question of schooling. The elementary classes held in Evangelical private schools were described as illegal by the Education Office and harried into closing down, while instructions were given to proceed against the parents of these school-children "with all the means the law provides".

Agreement has, however, now been reached between Dr Dibelius, the Bishop of Berlin, and Councillor May, the Director of the National Education Department on the Berlin City Council, that the confessional schools may remain in existence as "experimental schools in the nature of examples". Their number is not to exceed one in the French Sector and three in the other three Sectors. They will cover the first to the ninth years of education, and will in general be uniform. One higher-grade establishment for them all is to be set up, and in addition it is hoped to start an Evangelical High School.

E.P.S. Geneva

U.S.S.R.Organisation of Evangelicals

According to an account by "The Messenger of Brotherhood" (No. 1, 1948) the periodical of the "Union of Baptists and Evangelicals" in the U.S.S.R., the Council of this Union consists of ten members, of whom five reside permanently in Moscow. Of the other five, three live in Kiev, one in Riga and one in Tallinn.

The chief church of the Union is in Moscow. The local parishes now total four thousand, with a presbyter at the head of each. The presbyters, who, the report states, are by no means always properly equipped for their post, try to make up for what they lack by indefatigable work in the spiritual realm.

The parishes are organised in districts, and at the head of the districts, of which there are 70, there are the chief presbyters, whose task is to help the presbyters. These chief presbyters sometimes have as many as 200 parishes to care for, especially in the western part of the U.S.S.R. The age of the chief presbyters varies between 50 and 70, but they also include younger men of from 35 to 40. The chief presbyters use every means of transport at their disposal when on their journeys of inspection, including aircraft, but usually journeys are to be done on foot.

As a rule a presbyter gives his services free. Only one-third of the presbyters are materially supported by their congregations. In general, a presbyter earning his daily bread in a factory or a collective farm can only devote himself to his spiritual office in his spare time. The maintenance of a parish as usually understood, therefore, is only possible where the presbyter and congregation contribute everything absolutely essential from their own earnings. There are, however, several hundreds of better-situated parishes which possess places of worship of their own, for instance in Leningrad, Kuibyshev, Pensa and Tallinn. The office of presbyter is pastoral, not missionary. Genuine missionary work, the founding of new parishes, etc., is done by specially appointed workers sent by the Director of the Union. Any visiting preachers must possess a certificate from the chief presbyter, as spurious "travelling preachers" are perpetually arriving and "sowing discord in the congregations."

Much of the parish work is performed by women. The total number of members is not fixed. According to earlier information, there are some 400,000 registered church members, and over four million who attend services. In contrast to the years 1945-46, there are today fewer new members just baptised, not because fewer people wish to join, but because the sacrament of baptism is now only administered to those who are genuinely convinced of the renewal of their whole being by the Holy Spirit. Candidates for baptism must therefore adduce proof that they really wish to lead a Christian life, and are thus mature to take their place among the congregation. As a result, the congregations are made up of loyal members, who often have to come many kilometres across country to attend their church.

E.P.S. Geneva

ITALYLecture by Father Boyer on Amsterdam

The "Osservatore Romano", which did not publish any account of the World Council Assembly in Amsterdam, gives in its issue of December 11, a report of a

lecture by Father Charles Boyer, S.J., Prefect-General of Studies and President of the international association "Unitas", in the hall of the Papal Gregorian University, before Cardinals Tisserant, Pizzardo and Lavitrano and a large audience of priests and laymen.

"The lecturer", states the Vatican's organ, "began by recalling that the Assembly of the World Council of Churches was the result of a movement already half a century old... The Roman Catholic Church, although it was invited, never agreed to send delegates to any ecumenical gathering, and on this occasion it did not allow any of its members to take part, even as unofficial observers...

"The Assembly, although it had 1,400 members representing 43 different countries, was not able to act with any great vigour... Among the positive results of the Assembly's labours, Father Boyer listed - apart from the publication of a Message and the reports of the Sections - that important fact, the definite constitution of the Council. The Churches associated with the Council now, he said, possessed an organ allowing of collaboration in matters of common interest, and capable of pursuing the aims of the ecumenical movement.

"Has a step towards unity really been taken? The speaker endeavoured to answer this question without either illusory optimism or an unjust and discouraged pessimism.

"On the one hand, it appears that there is a perpetual aspiration towards real unity, unity of faith. On the other, there is the division of which Amsterdam was so profoundly conscious. Measures do not seem to have been taken to remedy this evil, unless in the actual constitution of the Council and in the permanence of the theological study work. In actual fact, the only agreement finally reached by the delegates was the recognition of Christ as God and Saviour, which was the condition set to all Churches wishing to join the Council.

"If the Churches are to be united, there must be unity of doctrine. Asked as it must be asked, the ecumenical question has only one answer - union with the Roman Catholic Church, which could not modify its dogma in any way. Jesus Christ, Who desired the unity of the Church, is too wise to desire the impossible, and too powerful to allow what He desires to be impossible. He has given to His Church the means of unity; that is, an authority able to exclude error and define truth.

"Having thus described the difficulties involved in work for unity, the lecturer mentioned the reasons which in his view allowed men to hope for some progress towards union. The prayer of Christ for unity goes out in some way to all those who believe in Him. How then should we not see a call of Providence in this longing for lost unity which has been working since the beginning of the century in so many of our separated brethren? Submission to Christ, asserted so insistently, will eventually do its work in men's souls, and join what men have put asunder.

"Father Boyer ended by expressing that hope that non-Catholics would preserve and deepen their longing for real unity. Catholics will cooperate in the work of Providence by prayer and example, and by supporting Roman Catholic movements for union."

E.P.S. Geneva

AUSTRIAEcumenical Church Service

A special service was held by Displaced Persons at Salzburg on November 18, in connection with the Week of Prayer and World Fellowship arranged jointly each year by the World Alliance of YMCAs and World's YWCA.

Members of the following Churches participated: Austrian Protestant, Russian Orthodox, Ukrainian Orthodox, Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox, Hungarian Reformed, Austrian Baptist, German Reformed (the Siebenbürger Volksdeutsche), Latvian Lutheran and American Episcopalian (Anglican).

The service began by an introduction by the Austrian pastor and the readings from the New Testament by seven other pastors, each in his own tongue. The church was packed and there was a great sense of comradeship transcending the barriers of language and ritual as the service progressed. E.P.S. Geneva

Independent Status of German Churches Abroad

With the agreement of the Office for Foreign Affairs of the Evangelical Church in Germany, four Evangelical Synods of German origin in Brazil, namely, the Synod of Rio Grande do Sul, the Lutheran Synod, the Synodal Union of Santa Catarina and Parana and the Central Brazilian Synod, have now formed an independent Church.

The same has happened in Italy, where seven of the German Evangelical communities have united to form an "Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy". They are striving for a closer connection with the Lutheran World Federation, and also hope to maintain close spiritual contact with their mother-church in Germany.

E.P.S. Geneva

GREAT BRITAINMission to London, 1949

The Church of England is planning a large-scale effort for May 1949 on the lines of the "Mission to London" organised in 1948. This will have a three-fold aim in view: to infuse new power into the Church through a realisation by its members of their dependence upon the Holy Spirit; to appeal to those members of the Church who are lukewarm in their attachment; and to interest those who are outside the Church altogether, and to win them for it in the years to come.

Spiritual preparations include refresher courses in the country for 1000 clergymen, divided into groups of 12, free-time instruction for lay helpers, and regular training in prayer and evangelisation in the parishes.

On May 14, 1949, the campaign will open with a procession of 10,000 people and a service of dedication in St. Paul's. During the weeks that follow, evangelisation will be carried on daily in halls, churches, schools, universities, and the parks and streets of the city, and a group of six, both laymen and clergymen, will be allotted to each meeting. Later there will be mass meetings over a period of five days in St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, where the best speakers who can be found will deal with social and political problems from the Christian standpoint. On May 29, this campaign of evangelisation will come to an end.

E.P.S. Geneva

